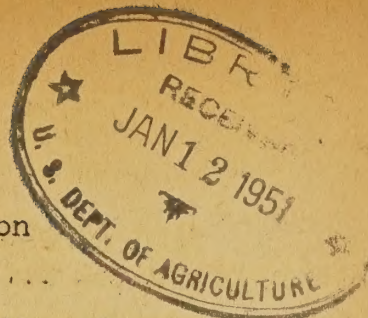


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FOOD BUYMANSHIP, - AND WHAT IT MEANS

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Food buymanship is a lot of different things to a lot of different people. And you would find it pretty hard to locate an exact dictionary definition of those two words, used in the sense that we are using them today.

If I suggested that you look up salesmanship, you could be pretty confident of finding a good definition. In fact, you could just say that salesmanship is the art of selling ... and I suppose that would be a good definition ... with emphasis on the art if you're in the field of education ... and emphasis on the selling if you're a dollar-conscious business man.

You might hazard a definition of food buymanship on what the various word parts mean.

Of course, the meaning of "food" is pretty obvious. The dictionary says that it is "nutritive material taken into an organism for growth, work, or repair, and for maintaining the vital processes" ... which certainly leaves a wide range of quality.

"Buy" means "to acquire by giving a price ... to purchase, as opposed to sell."

"-ship" is a noun-forming suffix added chiefly to nouns denoting persons. It denotes "art or skill," among other things.

And "man," of course, is the human element, meaning here not only men but everyone who does buying.

Put those together ... and you have the art or skill of purchasing food.

If salesmanship is the art or skill of selling ... and buymanship is the art or skill of buying ... then, buymanship can be termed the opposite of salesmanship. And in many ways, it is just that.

Before we go any further, let's define or explain another point. When we talk of salesmanship, we usually mean good salesmanship. For instance, you've heard it said that a man used salesmanship in selling this item or in putting that idea over. He did a good job. The same connotation is applied to buymanship. We consider it usually to be good buymanship. But like any art or skill, salesmanship and buymanship both vary from the level of excellence to pretty nearly the lack of any skill or art.

If this spell of defining settled the whole thing, there would be no point to my standing up here this morning and spending an hour and fifteen minutes on the subject assigned to me. But the latter part of the subject ... this business of "What It Means" ... takes care of that matter. And here we move a long way from the exactness of the dictionary definition.

Means Different Things to Different People

As I pointed out in the first sentence, food buymanship means a lot of

different things to a lot of different people. And I am going to divide those people into four groups ... four because they conveniently fall into that many ... but you could easily make many more groupings.

What does food buymanship mean to consumers ... to producers ... to handlers ... and to the people who work with consumers?

Now, let us proceed to examine each of those groups, one at a time.

I. TO CONSUMERS

The consumer group is the largest of the four, since we are all consumers in one way or another ... and what food buymanship means to me, to you, and to everyone else as consumers is of basic importance in any program of marketing education.

For one thing, food buymanship refers to the skill that consumers exert in buying the food supply for the home. Now, buying the food supply for the home is a practice that millions of people right here in New England use every day. But it is a lot more complicated than we usually realize and much more complicated than the commonness and frequency of its occurrence might indicate.

Many Factors Involved

Food buymanship involves the consumer in the recognition, study and evaluation of price, service, quantity, quality, and values in relation to the needs of that consumer and that consumer's family.

Take price, for instance. There must be decisions on whether the price asked for an item is within the range that can be paid.

As far as service is concerned, the food shopper must decide whether she wants the food delivered ... whether she wants to charge the bill and pay for it later ... or whether she prefers to operate on a cash-and-carry basis.

There must be consideration of qualities ... whether the product to be bought has the quality that is wanted.

There must be decisions on the amount or quantity to buy ... with consideration of whether it can all be used, or whether it can be stored, or whether it will go to waste.

I've mentioned these one by one. But really they are all pretty much inter-related. Decisions on price must bring into consideration the matter of quantity, quality and service. Decisions on quantity must give attention to price, quality and use. And so on down the list.

Basis For Decision

The consumer needs some basis for making all of these decisions ... some basis for buying the food supply intelligently.

She needs to know qualities and how to recognize them when she sees them. She needs to know what are good substitutes or alternative choices... and when to take those substitutes or alternatives. She must know the relationships that price has to all of these things. She must be able to recognize good price. And, furthermore, she must know where she can buy the things she needs ... of the

quality and quantity she wants' ... and at the prices she decides it is possible for her to pay.

In buying many of the items on the food shopping list, she needs to know about marketing seasons ... when a particular crop is being marketed in volume ... when she should buy her supply for canning or freezing ... when she should substitute the item for other less plentiful foods. She needs to know about varieties ... which ones are best suited for the uses she has in mind ... which are best for preserving. For example, she needs to know that Wolf Rivers may look like a lot of apple for the money ... but they are pretty poor compared with McIntosh for eating out of hand. She needs to know that a Cortland has a special advantage as a salad apple.

The food shopper needs to know food values... which fruits and vegetables, for example, provide the essentials for good health ... and which particular fruit or vegetable within the various groups is the best buy at any particular time.

Sometimes, I'm sure, the woman who does the family food shopping must envy the purchasing agent of industry. The purchasing agent can draw up a rigid set of specifications ... outlining in exact detail just what he wants and how he wants it. Then, he can call for bids and take the lowest bid offered by a manufacturer who builds the item to the exact specifications wanted.

Not so in the case of the food shopper. The very nature of such things as fruits and vegetables prevent any exactness of specification. Fruits and vegetables just don't grow that uniform. There wouldn't be much point to a food shopper insisting that each carrot in a bunch must be exactly so many hundreds-of-an-inch wide and so many long ... that the color must be an exact shade of reddish orange ... and that the green of the tops must be of so much intensity of a particular shade of green.

No, there are wide ranges of quality to be considered in buying food ... ranges that need to be known and recognized. And uniformity is general rather than specific.

Price Probably is Number One Factor

Price probably is the most important of all the things that a consumer keeps in mind when shopping. Ask any woman who approaches a counter what she goes by in making her selection. Chances are that she will say "price," immediately ... then, after a moment's hesitation, she's likely to add ... "and quality." She goes by other things as well. But it may take her a minute or so to list them for you.

I suppose it is only natural that price should get the Number One position .. since it concerns the medium with which we make our purchases ... that green stuff which never seems to go all the way around or last long enough. And you can usually find the same item, though quality may vary, at different prices.

Choice Between Stores

Let's take, as an example, the experience of a resident of Amherst who wanted to buy a new stove. She had pretty much decided on the particular stove she wanted, the size, the model, and so on. Then, she came to matter of price. She

shopped around ... and she found that prices ... for this particular stove ... were ranging all the way from \$240 to \$329 ... a range of \$89.

The suggested retail price for this particular stove was \$319 at one time. Some stores were still selling it at that price.

In one store, the owner had not been finding business any too good for some of the things he had for sale. But stoves were selling well. He figured he could make a little more profit on stoves. So, he boosted the price on the model this woman was looking for to \$329 ... hoping that he could still sell stoves at a level which was ten dollars above the suggested retail figure.

Then, the wholesale price of this stove went down. And the manufacturer suggested a new retail price of \$269 ... a drop of \$50 from the previous suggested price. At least one store adopted this new price.

But one country-town appliance dealer had low overhead ... he figured he could cut his prices about 15 percent and still make a good margin of profit ... and possibly increase his sales. So, he dropped the stove price to \$240.

In looking for a store at which to buy her new stove, this woman found a couple of stoves that had \$319 on the price tag ... one store with \$329 ... one with \$269 ... and one store with \$240. It was the same identical model and size in all cases.

Well, the consumer bought the stove at the store which wanted \$240 ... and she saved \$89 in doing so.

But to buy in this economical manner, she had to know the value of stoves ... where they could be bought ... what she wanted in the way of size and model ... what the manufacturer figured his stove should sell for ... and then what the individual stores were asking for it. And she had to know the selling practices of the various stores.

Many of you are probably thinking that she must have spent a lot of that \$89 in shopping around. She could have, of course. But in this particular instance, her trips to the various stores were in the course of buying other necessary things.

Shopping Around

Shopping around can be overdone ... and the cost can far outweigh the savings, especially if the savings are relatively small. There are people who live right here in Amherst who go to Northampton to do their food shopping. And I'm sure that some of them, at least, end up paying more for their groceries than if they bought them right here in town.

Incidentally, buying in quantity can lead to that same result many times. You buy something in quantity and save some money on the purchase. But unless you have a place to keep that quantity ... unless it maintains its quality until you use it ... you may be paying more than if you purchased it in amounts that you could use at one time.

The savings in quantity purchases is like the profit in ice cream for the man who runs a store or an ice cream parlor ... it's in the bottom of the can. And if the ice cream melts or spoils or loses its flavor before he sells what's in the bottom of the can, he doesn't get from his ice cream the main part of

his profit.

Or take the buying of paint for example. I suppose a good share of the cellars of Massachusetts homes contain some unused paint of one sort or another. Many of the people who bought that paint actually needed only a pint or a quart. But a gallon came cheaper. So, they saved money by buying the gallon. They used the paint they needed, and put the rest in the cellar to use some other time. Until they do use it, they haven't saved any money on that quantity purchase. And you know, yourself, how it usually works out. When the next occasion arrives to use some paint, you want another shade, or you think the paint you have is too old or too hard or something else. And you go to the store to buy another can.

Being a regular customer opens up a regular source of items that are short in supply and also many times a better selection to choose from. People who run from store to store seldom get preferential treatment or what might be called regular-customer treatment.

But there is need to do some shopping around ... to check on what is being sold, at what prices, in other stores ... to compare the price you are paying with what you might pay other places. But more than price must be kept in mind in making such comparisons.

Choice Within A Store

That example of the woman who bought a stove, that I described a few minutes ago, is an example of the art of buymanship operating in choices between stores. Now, let's take an example of choices in the same store ... and this one in the field of food. It concerns a question which probably presents itself to many food shoppers every day of the year, and a question which apparently doesn't get answered very well, if the buying practices I've observed are any indication. It's this matter of "In what form shall I buy the family's breakfast orange juice?"

Shall I buy fresh oranges and squeeze out the juice?

Shall I buy canned orange juice?

Shall I buy the frozen orange juice concentrate?

Let's take some prices and choices that were available in Boston last winter, on January 31st, to be specific.

That week, the newspaper advertisements showed that one could buy fresh oranges at 43 cents a dozen, frozen orange juice concentrate at 27 cents a can, and canned orange juice at 35 cents a can in Boston area chain stores.

Here is what was available at the stores:

1. Florida oranges in two sizes ... 200-count at 43 cents a dozen ... and a larger size, 176-count, at 49 cents a dozen.
2. Florida oranges in mesh bags at 5 pounds for 45 cents. The bag actually contained 10 oranges and weighed $5\frac{1}{2}$ pounds.
3. Large size California oranges at 6 for 39 cents.
4. California canned orange juice in large 46-ounce cans, labeled sweetened, and selling at 39 cents a can.

5. Florida canned orange juice, in large 46-ounce cans, marked unsweetened, and priced at 35 cents a can.

6. Florida orange juice in small 18-ounce cans at 16 cents a can.

7. One brand of frozen orange juice concentrate in a 6-ounce can for 27 cents.

8. Another brand of frozen orange juice concentrate at the same price.

9. A third brand of frozen orange juice concentrate selling at two 6-ounce cans for 47 cents.

Using a four-ounce serving as a basis, and figuring out the amounts of juice obtained from each of these sources, and the prices that a four-ounce serving costs, you get these results.

The four-ounce servings cost:

The unsweetened Florida canned orange juice in a 46-ounce can	3.04 cents
The sweetened California orange juice in a 46 ounce can	3.39 cents
The Florida canned orange juice in an 18 ounce can	3.55 cents
Frozen concentrate Brand C (6-ounce can, 2/47¢)	3.88 cents
Frozen concentrate Brand A (6-ounce can, 27¢)	4.48 cents
Frozen concentrate Brand B (6-ounce can, 27¢)	4.48 cents
Florida oranges (200 count)	4.40 cents
Florida oranges (176 count)	4.50 cents
California oranges (large size)	8.00 cents

On that particular day, at those particular prices, and in that particular location, canned orange juice was the best buy as far as price was concerned, providing the most in dollar value. And among the various offerings of canned orange juice, the unsweetened Florida juice, in the large size can, was the most economical choice. It provided a serving of orange juice for breakfast at three cents cost. California fresh oranges, on the other hand, would provide that same size serving at a cost of eight cents.

That was last winter. Now, take a look at some similar figures that I collected yesterday right here in Amherst at one of the local grocery stores.

Fresh Oranges

California 280-count 55¢ a dozen
California 200-count 65¢ a dozen

Canned Juice

Unsweetened large 46 ounce can 39¢
Unsweetened small 18-ounce can 19¢

Frozen Concentrate

One brand 6-ounce can for 27¢
12-ounce can for 52¢
Another brand 6-ounce can for 27¢

Again, using a 4-ounce serving as the basis, we get these results:

Four-ounce servings cost:

California 280-count fresh oranges	9.16 cents
California 200-count fresh oranges	7.22 cents
Unsweetened large 46-ounce can	3.39 cents
Unsweetened small 18-ounce can	4.15 cents
Frozen concentrate Brand A 6-ounce can	4.48 cents
Frozen concentrate Brand A 12-ounce can	4.32 cents
Frozen concentrate Brand B 6-ounce can	4.48 cents

Both of these examples show that one or the other form of orange juice is the most economical purchase, from the point of view of price alone. But good food buymanship concerns consideration of more than price alone.

More Than Just Price

There is the matter of flavor. Some people don't like canned orange juice. Some people prefer the taste of fresh oranges to that of frozen concentrate. There are definite preferences. And to have the breakfast orange juice satisfactory, so that the family is off to a good start for the day, it's essential that the juice served meet the preferences of the family.

There's the matter of time to prepare and serve the juice. A person who is in a hurry to get to work may prefer to use the frozen concentrate or canned juice, instead of squeezing fresh oranges, purely on the basis of the time saved and the few extra winks of sleep that he can have before getting breakfast.

There's the matter of food value, but here the consumer is at quite a disadvantage in knowing what the vitamin content and relative nutritional values of the orange juice are. Fresh oranges might seem, at first thought, to be the best source of vitamins. But they may have been picked before they should have been. They may have been held or shipped under conditions that reduce or destroy the vitamin content. Probably there isn't much difference, generally, in the vitamin content of orange juice in all three forms - fresh, frozen concentrate, and canned - as bought in stores in this area.

There's the matter of a place to store the juice. Frozen concentrate, for example, has to stay frozen until it is mixed. Fresh oranges are highly perishable. Cans take up room.

There's the matter of quality, if you choose fresh oranges. There's the matter of quality and taste in canned juice, things which vary greatly between brands and even within the same brand depending on the time of the season the canning was done.

Also, there's the matter of whether some other source of vitamin C might be a better choice, since probably it's as a source of vitamin C that orange juice gets its importance at the breakfast table.

After the food shopper gets through all of the decisions that must be made for each of those points, she can't sit back and feel that the job has been accomplished. And from then on, she can buy her orange juice on the basis of

the decision reached today. Her decision today may only hold for a day. Prices and supplies are constantly changing. There are changes of a longer-time nature based on season. Fresh oranges may be a better buy tomorrow ... and frozen concentrate some other time.

I think, though, that those examples do provide some idea of what food buymanship means to the consumer, and how there is far more involved in food buymanship than our dictionary definition would indicate.

II. HANDLERS

Now, let us move along to the second group of the four listed earlier for consideration. This is the Handler group. And we're going to consider what food buymanship of the consumer means to the people in this group, the people who are the salesmen who sell the food. We'll confine the scope of this consideration to the retailer, since retailing and the retail store are the main subjects of this marketing school.

Food buymanship is of utmost importance to the handler or retailer of food. And the more good food buymanship he sees, the better I expect he would like it.

For one thing, good buyers are the easiest to serve. They know what they want, and they will take it when they see it. They know how much they want. They know prices and what the values are. They may be fussy at times. But the cost of selling to a good buyer is lower for the retailer.

Good Buying

I'll tell you of one example of this good food buymanship type of person. It was in a chain store in East Braintree. A woman wanted to buy some lettuce. She went up the produce counter as if she knew what she was doing, not as if she accidentally strayed in that direction. She took a look at the heads of lettuce offered on the counter, picked one up carefully, lifted it to judge its weight, and then put it back. She looked at the price tag. Then, she went over and bought a head of cabbage which she had first carefully surveyed and lifted to judge its heaviness and quality.

I asked her why she made her decisions as she did. She said -"I came here to get something for a salad. I thought I wanted lettuce. But that lettuce has been around too long. The heads are light for their size. In fact, some of them haven't any size left. The leaves are broken. Some of the heads are pretty badly bruised. And they're rather expensive, too. Cabbage will fit in just as well in my salad plans. It's much less expensive. Those heads of cabbage are of good quality. They've got a lot of food value. So, I bought cabbage."

I bravely asked a question about how her family liked cabbage instead of lettuce, probably indicating by my tone of voice that cabbage was not exactly an aristocrat in the vegetable world. She quite promptly told me that if she couldn't prepare any vegetable in a way that her husband would like, she'd stop calling herself a good cook. Which may or may not be the answer.

At any rate, that woman knew what she wanted, knew how to find out if it met her ideas of what it should be, and didn't hesitate to make a change and get something that did do so.

Poor Buying

Now, consider another food shopper whom Fred Cole and I observed make some selections in a chain store in Louisville. She apparently wanted some cauliflower for the family's evening meal. She moved up to a counter that had some cauliflower on it, and started picking up a few of the heads. She dropped one on the floor, knocked several others over into adjoining spaces, and then picked out one of the poorest of the heads on display, although all of the cauliflower was relatively good.

She turned to the woman who accompanied her and said that she didn't think that would do, and anyway frozen cauliflower was much cheaper. So, she tossed the head of cauliflower back on the counter, and moved on to the frozen food section, picked out a box of cauliflower and put it in her basket, apparently satisfied that she had made the best choice and was saving herself some money.

This was at a time when cauliflower of the fresh type was plentiful and selling at a low price in that area. I don't recall the prices now. But it seems that we figured out this woman was paying between two and three times as much for her cauliflower (usable cauliflower)... after she rejected some good quality heads for the frozen cauliflower.

Maybe she didn't want the trouble of breaking up the head and getting it ready. Maybe the particular Joneses she was trying to keep up with bought frozen cauliflower. But, more likely, she just didn't know what good buymanship involved.

Which Was Better?

If you were a retailer, you might prefer to have the food shopper of our first example take some of the lettuce. It was perishable, and was perishing fast. You'd want to get rid of it. But I'm sure you'd find that food shopper the easiest to serve and the least expensive to wait on.

The second woman didn't know what she wanted, how much she wanted, and her reaction to price didn't show much reasoning. She is an example of the food shopper who is hardest for the retailer to work with. She dropped his cauliflower on the floor. She mixed up his display. And while he may have made a few more cents on her purchase of the frozen item, his girl had to spend about five or six minutes straightening up the display, which she might have more profitably put into selling people more food from a vantage point which she wasn't blocking off the counter from those customers.

Those aren't the best examples. But they are two that I can assure you actually happened.

Impulse Buying

Let us consider this business of impulse buying. It has a definite place in food buymanship of the best type, where substitutes and alternatives are concerned. The food shopper who went to buy lettuce and found cabbage a better buy was doing a type of impulse buying, though you may prefer to call it a conditioned impulse.

But impulse buying can have many disadvantages ... as when you arrive home with a quantity of apples bought on the impulse, with no place to keep them, and

then have them go bad before you use them. It may seem strange to give so much importance to this matter of a place to keep food. Likely, there wouldn't be many places in Amherst where storage would be a problem, outside of the case of students. But in a city like Boston or New York, modern cliff dwelling's major problem for many people is food, meals, and space.

Consumer food buymanship from the point of view of the retailer is very important. The good food buyer, who knows what she wants and how much she wants, can buy to advantage any time. And such a buyer can also make the life of the retailer a happier one, making it easier for him to sell her what she wants, and making it possible for him to do that selling job much less expensively.

III. PRODUCERS

The third of our four groups includes the producers, the people who produce the food, the selling of which involves salesmanship, and the buying of which by the consumer, involves food buymanship. The question we have to consider is - What does food buymanship mean to the producer?

That is a vital question in food marketing educational work, for the producer can be a big obstacle, unless he understands how the teaching of food buymanship can result in considerable benefits to him. It is easy for a producer to get the wrong idea and put himself in opposition to educational work of this nature.

But I have yet to meet a producer who doesn't agree that good food buymanship will enable people to appreciate quality when they see it, and that such appreciation is to his benefit. For people are then more willing to pay for the extra handling, the extra care, and the extra work required in the type of growing and marketing that insures quality products.

Good food buymanship means that the purchaser not only recognizes quality and is willing to pay for it, but also that he takes the product home carefully, keeps it in good condition and prepares it well, so that the results of quality are apparent on the dining table as well as in the field or, on the food counter.

Since many producers are also retailers, selling at the farm and on roadside stands, some of the things I am saying under this group heading might have also been put in the previous section about retailers. But it should be understood that they apply to both groups, the retail store people and the farmer who sells at retail, insofar as they concern the effects on the seller.

Better Marketing

Good buymanship on the part of the buyer makes some demands on the producer. Sloppy selling can't be justified. And there probably would be less demand for mixed qualities and for the lower utility packages. More producers would find it necessary to put into practice some of the things that progressive farmers have been doing in marketing for some time.

Producers sometimes raise this question - "You tell consumers what is the best quality tomato, for example. Then, they will want only the best quality, and we can't grow all best quality tomatoes, or all tomatoes of the ideal size."

I don't agree with that conclusion. You can have good utility of small size items, of items that lack the color of the best, and even of items that

have less quality than the best. There wouldn't be demand only for the ideal. But ... and it's an important "but" ... the price must be in accordance.

You've probably heard it said before that only about 5 to 15 percent of the food shoppers in the United States want the best, with price of secondary consideration. In fact, I think it was at last year's marketing school that those figures were brought out by one of the speakers. Another five to fifteen percent are what might be called "price buyers", with price the only consideration in their selection. They buy damaged items or those that are so plentiful prices have gone down, whenever they can. The rest of the Nation's food shoppers - 70 to 90 percent of them - consider both price and quality.

There's a development in Worcester County that illustrates the utility of a food product of varying size. On roadside stands around Worcester, producers have been selling small potatoes at 45cents a peck. These are good quality potatoes, not junk, but they are small in size. And, because they are small, they aren't considered the most desirable potatoes. But they do have good utility ... they may even be preferred by some people ... especially if the price is in line with the size.

The standard size potatoes have been selling at 60 cents. And the very large ones have been priced at 40 cents. Those prices may have changed now. But that's the way they were a few weeks ago.

On these roadside stands, there are three different prices for potatoes, and three different classes of potatoes offered to the consumer. That's good business for the buyers and good business for the sellers too. But keep in mind that before any of these potatoes were offered for sale, the poor utility potatoes had been taken out.

In the City of Boston, there is a big market for potatoes at a lower price than they can be bought now. At least, there are many people who maintain there is. These potatoes wouldn't have to be the best grade potatoes. the smaller size ones at a lower price would sell in certain sections, where people now buy something other than potatoes.

Good buymanship means specific buying. And for the producer that means specific packaging. But it doesn't always mean fine sorting.

Take asparagus for example. Any good, average-size stalk of asparagus is alright for home use. Take out the so-called "shoestrings" and "jumbos" ... and the variation in size between stalks doesn't make much difference, assuming the quality is the same. Everyone at the table doesn't have to have the same size stalk.

But in restaurants it's a different story. Restaurants want asparagus stalks to be the same size. They want to be sure that when you get asparagus you have the same size stalk as the fellow next to you who put down the same amount of money for his meal as you did for yours.

Tomatoes offer another example. It's desirable to have some difference in the ripeness of tomatoes, if you don't plan to use them all at once. Then, as you use the ripest ones, the others will reach their ripe stage progressively and be ripe when you are ready to use them.

But if you're making salads in a restaurant, and you're using all of the tomatoes today in those salads, you'll want them all to be ripe, not ripe

tomatoes in the noontime salads, and green ones for the night meal.

Yes, good food buymanship on the part of consumers can work to the advantage of producers through better understanding of what quality in produce means, through a willingness to pay for quality, through an understanding of the utility offered by less than the top quality.

Good food buymanship can also insist on better care of the products of the farm while they are in the retail store, in order to maintain quality. It doesn't do any good for a farmer to grow quality into his corn or carrots or eggs, if the retailer throws away that quality through improper handling and display, before the consumer has an opportunity to buy them.

IV. PEOPLE WORKING WITH CONSUMERS

Now we have come to the fourth and last of our groups. Here the question is - What does food buymanship mean to the people who work with consumers? Let's consider that first from the general viewpoint ... and then specifically from the point of view of Extension workers.

People working with consumers must know what good food buymanship means in terms of those consumers, in terms of handlers, and in terms of producers. If they are going to teach good food buymanship ... or if they are going to assist consumers to improve their food buymanship ... they must themselves have a good knowledge of what it is all about. They have to know something of the position of the producer, the handler, and the consumer ... in the whole scheme of food marketing. And they have to be fluent in this knowledge.

If there is anything that is characteristic of this business of marketing, it is constant change. And for people who work with consumers this means keeping up with those changes. It's not a matter of learning something once and then resting on that knowledge for the rest of your life. It's keeping up with a dynamic thing ... a thing that is constantly changing in some respects ... and gradually changing over a relatively long period of time in other respects.

They must recognize that buymanship is as much an art as salesmanship ... and it has all of the complications of salesmanship ... but at the same time all of the chances of success that salesmanship does. They must know the things that make a good salesman, as well as the things that make a good buyman.

Some of the work in marketing education involves providing information. Other parts of it concern the teaching of principles.

Extension Workers

As far as Extension agents are concerned, some of the work is directed through the efforts of the Home Demonstration Agent to the women of the house ... whether you call them homemakers, kitchen executives, or housewives.

It's asking a lot of a woman to be a good buyer. But that is her traditional role in the home. She spends most of the family income. And on the wisdom of her purchases depends the financial stability of the family.

The part of the Extension worker in aiding her to improve food buymanship is very real and very responsible.

Better food buymanship will mean better living for the family. It will mean savings of money, more and better nutritional value in the family meals, better health and well-being. In other words, it will mean a better family, and through the family a better community.

Teaching good food buymanship offers a medium for putting across many of the objectives of home demonstration Extension work. Take nutrition and nutritional information, for example. In food buymanship, the technical aspects of the science of nutrition can be translated into the everyday problems and decisions that a food shopper must meet and solve. It clothes the right-and-the wrong of vitamins and minerals with the form of a cabbage, a head of lettuce, or a peek of spinach. It enables the Extension worker to teach nutrition while providing help needed to solve food purchasing problems.

Good food buymanship and its teaching is a medium through which Extension workers can reach many people never before contacted by the Extension Service ... for it is a field of common interest and problems of all consumers, whether they live on a farm, in the slums of a city, or on the right side of the railroad tracks in a suburban town.

Good food buymanship to the Home Demonstration Agent is the subject-matter through which she can support the efforts of the Agricultural Agent in his work with producers ... for the aims of quality emphasis in his work presuppose a consumer who can recognize and appreciate quality and what it took to produce it.

Men agents need to know what makes a good buy from the point of view of the consumer ... and then relate that to what is produced, if the people they serve are to continue as successful producers. They need to anticipate changes or modifications in preferences of consumers. They need to understand the position of the handler, and the problems the handler or retailer has in merchandising and in protecting perishable items. If they work with producers who do roadside stand selling, they need to know a great deal about retailing and the retailer.

Food buying to them must mean an understanding of the entire marketing process ... for all of production, all of processing, and all of distribution are aimed at satisfying the consumer or "buyman."

Food buying must mean to them an awareness of the relationships of consumer preferences to the production problems of producers. They must know why consumers will take packaged spinach twenty to one over bulk spinach ... and will continue to do so even when both are placed side by side with the bulk a much better bargain ... and then that the spinach packagers don't want local spinach for packaging, because producers won't harvest it the way they want it. They need to know why consumers prefer California carrots to Massachusetts ones ... and how the percentage of locally grown carrots has decreased sharply. They need to know why it is almost impossible to sell certain varieties of fruits or vegetables in certain localities.

Food buymanship means, too, a realization that the days are over when an extension agent's field of interest can be limited to the production of a crop. For, with transportation what it is, with production areas so close to consuming centers, it is just as important to assist a farmer to market his crop and get a return from his investment, as it is to help him grow it. The former can lead to a good living. The latter can end in bankruptcy.

Food buymanship means to Extension men agents the operation of all those forces which spell profit or loss to the producers they work with ... and the more they know and can teach about this business of food buymanship ... the more valuable they can be to the producers with whom they work.

Conclusion

You've probably come to the conclusion long before now that what I have been presenting is not something new. You've probably heard it all in one form or another many times. No doubt, you've practiced many of the principles enunciated.

I, too, am aware of that. What I have tried to do is take some of these facts and relate them to each other ... organize them somewhat ... and in so doing answer the broad question of what food buymanship means.

This school emphasizes the retail store. It is designed to help you understand what goes on inside the retail store ... to explain the place of the retail store in food marketing ... and its implications in your own work, whether it be with producers or consumers.

The school was designed to help those present to understand the position, the problems, and the responsibilities of retailers in our marketing setup. And you certainly have reached the conclusion, if you didn't have it previously, that the retail store is the crossroads of the marketing avenues. It's the place where the producer's effort, the handler's effort, and the consumer's effort all come together ... where food meets price ... where salesmanship meets buymanship ... where the ultimate aim of production is satisfied.

It is there, then, that good food buymanship can serve the consumer, the producer and the handler well. And for all of us, it is there that we can best see the size of the educational task in food marketing that challenges Extension and everyone else who is working with consumers and producers and handlers. Good food buymanship is the symbol of that challenge.